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The Hampden Hippocrat

A Bulletin for the Hampden District of the Massachusetts Medical Society

VOLUME II

OCTOBER, 1943

NUMBER 3

District Reviewing Committee

At the June meeting of the Massachusetts Medical Society it was voted to have each district go to work on Procurement and Assignment, have a committee of three doctors interview the list of reluctant physicians and report back to the Society whether or not the men in this list should be pushed further by the proper authorities in asking for a commission.

The chairman of the Hampden District group is Dr. John Dwyer, and he tells us that his committee has interviewed twenty men in this area for the Massachusetts Medical Society. Most of them wanted to get in. Many of them have tried to get in, and he gives great praise to the efforts of those men on this list from the unapproved schools in Massachusetts, and the schools abroad, whose men are among us. He says that many of them have tried and re-tried. One in particular was accepted, went into uniform, was rejected for a physical defect, has come back here, and is now working to get in again. At the end of their survey they reported that nineteen of the twenty had done everything possible to get in, but that the twentieth had done nothing and hoped to do nothing about it.

It seems to me that this is as good a time as any to say that while many young men in their early medical careers started on their way into unapproved medical schools many of them have moved heaven and earth to be acceptable to their fellows since their graduation. One also wonders if the intellectually elite, who

have been reputed to run the Massachusetts Medical Society since its inception, had been really interested there need never have been unapproved schools in Massachusetts. It is possibly true that if the same effort had been put into clearing up the situation twenty years ago, when we had the power to do so, it would have been much easier than it was three years ago when we only barely had the power to do it. Of course in the old days these graduates were not numerous enough to cut into medical practice very severely, but when they became numerous enough to have considerable members of the population as their patients, our toes, becoming increasingly sore, rose up in intellectual righteousness. It seems to me that there is an analogy between the appeasement of medicine in Massachusetts and the appeasement of Fascism in the world. In both cases everybody pays a sorry bill, and the past merits or de-merits in the case are clouded by the overhang of passing time.

We are now faced with state medicine. Our hospitals may be forced into accepting standards, which they have heretofore frowned upon, and of all the states in the Union we probably have the poorest medical morale due to a divided house. It is something to note that of twenty men, whose names were sent to our County Society for investigation, nineteen of them mostly unrecognized by the rest of us had a clean bill as regards their patriotism, and the one who didn't was one of us.

Hampden Hippocrat

"Life is short and art is long, the occasion fleeting, experience fallacious and judgment difficult."
—Hippocrates, 430 B.C.

OFFICERS OF THE HAMPDEN DISTRICT MEDICAL SOCIETY

President—Dr. E. A. Knowlton

Vice-President—Sidney Carsley

Secretary-Treasurer—Dr. Wayne C. Barnes

EDITORIAL

By vote of the Council, as of October 6th, Massachusetts stands officially in line with more than forty other States in co-operation with the Federal Children's Bureau in the medical care of wives and children of the country's armed servants. Obviously, it would have been in poor taste, and provocative of nation-wide approbrium, to withhold participation in view of the fact that service allowances are not ample enough to provide such care. Even the proposed increases now before Congress probably will fall short of meeting medical items in domestic naval and military budgets.

A petition for a change in the wording of the agreement was coupled with the vote in an effort to eliminate bureaucratic discrimination in the choice of participating physicians. Details may be found in the Journal. It was felt by some Councillors that a more definite termination of such agreements should have been set to coincide with demobilization or an arbitrary period of months thereafter.

While the Council's action avoided Cleveland's side-track of non-participation, it definitely placed the members of

the Massachusetts Medical Society upon the right of way of State Medicine. No matter how artfully gilded with reservations it may be, the first spike has been driven under duress of the needs of war—just as the irons of prohibition were forged for the Nation four and twenty years ago. It is to be hoped that the second noble experiment will work out better than did the first.

By now it should be obvious to thoughtful physicians—and who of us is not given plenty of pauses for thought day by day?—that the practice of medicine is not so simple as Hippocrates held it to be on that island of Cos which John W. Vandercook insists is Coo, nor yet on a par with the polite practice which obtained when Dr. Holmes was waging war himself on over-dosage with heavy metals. The aristocratic era in medicine which was distinguished by ethical niceties is as outmoded as a past-due ration stamp. Even the day of gilt-edged specialism, cleverly publicized, and of lavishly furbished group medicine is passing, since taxes more and more are undercutting financial foundations "according to plan."

Indeed medical service today commonly is held to be as much a commodity as steel. Ship-builder Kaiser commandeers both at need with scant regard for underlying ethics, if press reports are credible. And organized opposition in the District of Columbia, as you know, was adjudged to be felonious by the eight new Old Men who must listen to Felix dissertate.

"If the truth was known," as Samule would say,* and we ourselves must admit, many worthwhile advances in medical practice have been achieved over organized medical opposition. The good work of the Reverend Cotton Mather in the introduction of vaccination against small

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Dr. W. A. R. Chapin
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pcx has been thrown in the faces of many generations of doctors of medicine. The noteworthy progress in the conquest of tuberculosis has been due fully as much to lay efforts as to professional. Lastly, as we look dispassionately on the state of medical practice all about us, who is bold enough to say there is no room for improvement?

But let us get on with the war! "Ad Astra per Exaspera!"*

* A Sense of Humus, by Bertha Damon, and Schuster, N. Y., 1943.

???

Having knowledge that Massachusetts was lining up with other states in the above venture I took the liberty of writing to twelve men in this area who are majoring in Obstetrics. The following is my letter:

"Dear Doctor: I am writing to the Obstetricians (known by me) in Springfield to get our own city reaction to the new arrangement for doctors to be paid fifty dollars, and fifty dollars only, by the government for delivering wives of service men. Personally I do not feel like endorsing it at the Massachusetts Medical Society Council meeting on October 6, 1943. Please answer me in confidence at once."

It is interesting to note that three of these men called me by phone and three others answered my letter.

No. 1 man said "Bill, I agree 100% with you."

No. 2 said, "\$50.00 seems reasonable to me if (1) the patient goes into the ward and (2) the delivery is uncomplicated. It's

certainly better than what I've been getting—a promise to pay (a higher price) "when Johnny comes march'g home."

No. 3 said, "Dear Bill: I have told the State Department of Public Health that except for certain selected cases I am not in on their \$50 Obstetric Scheme. I have said I would be a consultant for them (fee \$5) as I would probably see many patients in consultation who got into trouble, anyway. While \$50 is a small amount, it is not as small as \$35 offered by the Blue Shield for the same services. I think both schemes—where someone paid by the State or the State Society can dictate the fees to be paid—are foul, and I shall have as little to do with either one as possible. I shall give my charity where and to whom I see fit, without the niggling, interfering advice of the people who can sleep warm in their beds all night, and not be called out for rotten hard work at any hour of the twenty-four, and in their magnanimity's allow me a pittance for my services. To hell with them till they get too strong for me, and I too poor to carry on. Then we'll have to play ball with them or starve."

No. 4 phoned that probably we might eventually have to sign up but wasn't interested now.

No. 5 man told me that he would not do this work.

No. 6 said that this legislation if pressed, would speed him out of obstetrics, which was shortening his life anyway.

No. 7-12 are still to be heard from three weeks after letters are sent to them.

W. C.



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Wagner-Murray Bill S1161

The following letter was sent to our two Senators and our two Representatives on October 6 of this year. Following this letter copies of replies are appended.

October 6, 1943

Dear Sir:

I am inclosing a resume' of what many of us feel will happen if Senate Bill 1161 with its amendments will do to the doctors and their patients.

In this October quarterly issue of the Hampden Hippocrat, the official organ of the Hampden District Medical Society in Massachusetts, we plan to discuss this issue.

I wonder if it is asking too much of you to make a statement on this issue in Senate Bill 1161, bearing in mind that unless you choose to have it confidential to me your thought on the matter will be presented in this issue of the Hippocrat.

Trusting that you will find time to write me on this matter, I beg to remain

Very truly yours,

W. A. R. CHAPIN, M.D.

Executive Secretary

Hampden Hippocrat

* * * *

October 14, 1943

My dear Dr. Chapin:

I appreciate having your views, and your sending the copy of the memorandum enclosed in your letter.

Although this Bill is now pending before the Senate Committee, no action has been taken on it and none is contemplated in the near future.

Although I don't want to commit myself until after the hearings have been held, my general reaction is against the Bill.

Sincerely yours,

DAVID I. WALSH

* * * *

October 9, 1943

Dear Doctor Chapin:

I thank you for your letter of October 6th in reference to Senate bill 1161. I am glad to have the views of the Hamp-

den District Medical Society concerning this legislation. However, it is contrary to my long-established policy to make any statement regarding pending legislation until it is actually before the House for action and I can know its exact language. I trust you will appreciate my position.

Sincerely yours,

ALLEN T. TREADWAY

* * * *

October 11, 1943

Dear Bill:

I have received your letter and enclosure with reference to Senate Bill 1161. It is my understanding that this bill will not receive consideration for several weeks, and possibly not this year, by the House Ways and Means Committee. The Committee is now attempting to draw a non-tax bill which is a difficult and lengthy process at best. It is also my understanding that the authors of S1161 plan to change it through amendments. I have tried to find out what the situation is with regard to the bill. It would appear that no date has been set for any hearings, therefore it is not possible to determine as yet when it is likely to receive consideration. I do not believe that the bill will be acted upon in its present form but it is too early to determine what its future may be. It goes before one of the best Committees in the House, and I would expect that due to its controversial nature, it would be only reported by the Ways and Means Committee after substantial changes had been made. For that reason I have not been able to secure an expression of opinion concerning the future of the bill from members of the Committee, other than that they would not expect it to be reported in its present form.

It is a very important measure but will not receive much consideration from the

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members of the Committee as individuals until after they have disposed of the tax matter. I believe that at a later date I will be in a much better position to give you some more accurate information about the bill. Until the Committee has indicated what kind of a bill, if any at all, it plans to report, it is very difficult to write you a letter about it, since the information which I am able to obtain only goes so far as to state that it is very doubtful if the Committee would report the bill in its present form. The Committee members haven't heard any witnesses and naturally are not disposed to express any definite opinions. When the bill has actually come up for consideration, I will be glad to advise you concerning it and its prospects.

With kindest personal regards to you, I remain

Very Sincerely,
CHARLES R. CLASON

"Liaison"

Great numbers of young men have gone away, and in order to keep them feeling that they are still a part of us, and to keep us at home remembering the same thing, Dr. Walker of the Springfield Hospital has instituted a quarterly bulletin, which he compiles with the news, and sends to every doctor who sends a report letter to him in the preceding quarter. These letters come from Australia, Africa and most every other place, and one wonders why this could not be instituted at every hospital in our area.

These men are coming back some day. Many of them will return to the hospital, and we will remember their services, thanks to this bulletin. This bulletin not only tells the stories sent in by the men, but tells the men what's going on in the hospital. In the July issue one

notes a report from every department head in the hospital. The following is a sample of what we hear from a man who was a House Officer at the Springfield Hospital three years ago.

"Lt. Commander Ronald N. Grant writes from the U. S. S. Massachusetts, c/o Fleet Post Office, San Francisco, California, that he has been promoted. Grant has got quite a kick out of all the older doctors packing up their bags and going out to fight the war all over again. He goes on "It's a splendid commentary on your staff—that long list of men in the service. I can't help but think of those gents sticking it out in Springfield when the going was pretty thin. Now that the city is in clover, they shove off to do their part. Another thing that occurs to me is who is carrying on at home? What a workout they must be getting." Dr. Grant cannot oblige us with any highlights and whereabouts—but can say that he hasn't been without a touch of adventure himself. The following account from Dr. Grant is possibly the greatest compliment our training school for nurses has ever had. "Ran across Miss X. X., a gorgeous red head from The Springfield Training School. Met her at a Naval Base Hospital and got the greatest delight and pride in the fact that she was up to the usual high standards of beauty and charm established by Miss Blackman. We always maintained that our nursing school was very high-class and that, in addition, for total poundage involved they couldn't come any lovelier. Of course, I may be a bit prejudiced—especially after they called me "glamour boy!" "Lest you have me wrong, let me remind you that I'm an old married man with three young blondes who call me Daddy, and I'm more than pleased with my own very special nurse. I just want to point out what sort of an impression the girls make and how proud we should be of them."

Hardly any doctor in Hampden County will ever forget Allen S. Johnson. A description of him by me would be a futile gesture, but the following is a self-explanatory letter, which he writes to us as told by Dr. Walker.

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"Lt. Commander Allen S. Johnson is still in the Medical Field Service School at Camp Le Jeune, New River, N. C. He has written me two letters from the camp and also visited me while he was home on leave. To sum it all up, he does not like New River as well as he did Chelsea Naval Hospital. He writes, "Perhaps you'd like to hear about "MY DAY" and then you can try to figure out why the government wants 11,000 more M.D.'s. At 6 A. M. I awake in response to a series of unpleasant stimuli: (1) A blinding brassy sun in a cloudless sky. (2) The smell of damp bedding and of chicken feces in my pillow. (3) A series of sour notes which could only be produced by a bugler with a hare-lip. I peel myself free of the damp sheets and go through the motions of shaving. By the time I have had a shower the feeling of stickiness has gone and little rivulets of sweat are running down my back and brow. I hastily don my shirt, etc., to absorb the drip and step out into what is, relative to my boudoir, a cool morning. By the time I have reached the mess hall, however, I am dripping again. Sick call is a dull and desultory performance. Most of my time is spent sympathizing with the victims of mosquito bites and trying to locate lost reports. The latter are never found and the telephone is no help, so I give the corpsmen some remedical instructions which are seldom followed and take a chair out under the trees. 8:30-11:30 is spent feeding the mosquitoes, hitching my chair into the shade every few minutes, and wondering why I was a damn fool enough to join the Navy. By 11 A. M. all vestige of breeze has petered out, I am worn out swatting

mosquitoes, and my magazine still lies unopened on my knees. I then repair to my cozy little blast furnace to get ready for lunch. This consists of hastily shutting the door again and wondering why I was so foolish as to walk out in the hot sun to a room that is indefinitely more stifling than the outdoors. So this time I drift over to the Medical Field Service School barracks to see if they look any worse than I do and then to the mess hall. For a few minutes my fluid intake actually exceeds my output but my retaining capacity is eventually reached so I belch myself into an upright position and totter back to the dispensary. Here the same fascinating cycle of events repeats itself but it is now hotter, there is less breeze and shade, and I am now "dive bombed" by flies as well as mosquitoes. Eventually I come back to my residential inferno where I can take off all my clothes and drip in relative comfort. We eat again at 5 P. M. and after that we face the problem of keeping occupied until it is dark enough or cool enough to go indoors and try to sleep."

AN APOLOGY

Owing to an oversight the concluding paragraph of Dr. George Schadt's article was omitted in our last issue. It follows:

"In conclusion, may this Past President say that he is impressed again with the truth of the statement: No man lacks honor save in his own country. He was complimented in receiving formal invitations from fourteen of our eighteen District Societies to visit them. It was not his pleasure and privilege to visit the four Western County Societies."

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Dr. Kimberly

The name of this doctor is unknown to most of those who read this, but the Editors and the Staff of the Hippocrat owe much to this man. Since 1937 he has been Editor in Chief of the Worcester Medical News, a much more pretentious magazine than our own Hippocrat, and coming out every month. It has to do with the medical and dental news of the Worcester district.

A visit to Dr. Kimberly during a busy day in Worcester, regarding the anticipated publication of our Hippocrat, was enjoyed by us over two years ago. He was gracious, courteous, and very helpful. Later he came to Springfield, and met with the original group in our Society who established our magazine. He spent the evening with us, told us of probable costs, discussed with us the advantages of incorporation, which we haven't used, and all in all has been in no little degree responsible for this venture. He encouraged the group here in Springfield to try this venture.

Dr. Kimberly has now resigned as Editor in Chief, and has been elected to the post of Consulting Editor. He has always been a busy pediatrician, and his presence in Worcester has done much to elevate medical practice and further good feeling between the practioners in his district. Would that we ha da Dr. Kimberly in the Hampden District! Perhaps one of our returning soldiers may be an answer to this prayer. He exemplifies the scientific medical practioner, who lives not for himself alone.

DR. HATT'S LETTER

From Page 8

final take. We learned a good deal about war surgery, et., from our Allies and per-

LETTER FROM DR. CALVERT STEIN

Greetings to Dr. Chapin:

Many thanks for the Hippocrat, Always good to get news from home.

Expect to be away from Springfield for the duration, or what's left of it--so please note change of address.

The World's largest Naval Training Station is a World Fair all in itself, and so extensive that (free) bus service is required to make its units accessible.

Doctors come and go so fast that you never know who you're going to have the next meal with.

Still doing N. P. and becoming a better doctor for it.

Best regards to the boys.

Ever sincerely,
Calvert Stein.

haps made a small contribution in return.

The Sicilian affair was my greatest thrill. We joined a Medical Battalion for the invasion, landed with the boys at Licata on July 10th and then followed our 7th Army to just outside Messina. The rest is history. Never let anyone tell you that these American boys are not the world's best fighters! They are more than a match for any breed I've seen yet and even after all this they haven't begun to get mad!

Do I like the Army? No! But I do like the men that are doing the job and it has been a privilege to work for them and with them. It's rather nice to feel that one has had a part in sending home some boy who might otherwise have been a permanent resident in North Africa or Sicily.

Nelson.

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Dr. Hatt's Letter

Now aside from cordial greetings I fear there is little to tell that would be of real interest and still pass the censor. Perhaps a few sketchy high-lights will pass and you can use your own judgment about passing them along.

My first tour of duty took me to Ft. Sam Houston, Texas, where after a period of "processing" and "indoctrination" (in other words deflation and becoming a G. I. soldier) I served for a time as consulting orthopedist assigned to the surgical department Brook General Hospital. The next move was sudden and unexpected. The 3rd Auxiliary Surgical Group was organized at Ft. Sam and one day before departure for foreign service the C. O. put in his requisition and I caught the tail end of the train as it left the depot! The trip to England could hardly be called a pleasure tour for in addition to war hazards we struck that hellish storm of early December. Sea-sick? Not me!

Of our stay in Britain (Dec. 14 to Feb.

8th) was unpleasant, not from the standpoint of hospitality, but the weather. It was almost unendurable even for a hardy New Englander. Those damned little coal grates would be fine if supplemented by an oversize central heating plant. The trip to Oran was uneventful and our scurvy responded favorably to the finest oranges I've ever seen. North Africa in winter is also rather tough — rain and mud!

Perhaps it might be well here to explain the function of an Auxiliary Surgical Group. It is composed of mature 'pedic Surgeons, Anaesthetists and Technical Non-coms. Teams are made up of a Surgeon, Assistant Surgeon, Anaesthetist and three Techs. Each team is then assigned to whatever sector of the front organizations the action may call for additional aid. For instance Orthopedic Team number 1 was assigned to a British Casualty Clearing Station during the Tunisian Campaign and was in the

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